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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, January 3, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "DANGEROUS FAT-REDUCING PREPARATIONS." Items of interest to women, from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

--ooOoo--

Homemakers, our Monday news letter from Washington begins with this solemn item:

"The holidays are over,
Sister's getting fat;
She cannot find her waist line,
Is she annoyed at that!"

But after all, what can Sister expect, after a week of roast turkey and plum pudding and hard sauce, and fruit cake and candy and nuts. Well, let's read on, and see what our Washington correspondent, with the Federal Food and Drug Administration, is driving at. Quoting her report directly:

"Last month," she says, "you gave a very interesting talk on weight control. Sound, sensible, sane advice. I wish every woman -- and man -- who wants to reduce weight, had heard your words of wisdom. For there are still those who believe there's a short cut to slimness. There are those who believe you can take certain pills, teas, salts, powders, breads, or dangerous drugs, and -- without diet or exercise -- achieve a sylph-like figure.

"Dr. Arthur F. Cramp, writing some time ago about obesity cures, said that while some 'obesity cures' are harmless but worthless, many are actually or potentially harmful, and some are threats to life itself.

"Now," continues our correspondent, "among the so-called cures that may be considered a 'threat to life' are the preparations which include the dangerous drug, dinitrophenol (dye-nye-tro-fee-nul).

"Doctor Cramp, commenting on dinitrophenol, made these statements: 'Dinitrophenol has long been known in industry as one of the compounds used in making explosives, but only within the past two or three years has the stuff been suggested as a medicament. It not only stimulates metabolism, but has the peculiar property of producing an artificial fever. Newspapers, in reporting deaths from the use of dinitrophenol as an obesity cure, have not inaptly described the action as a "literal cooking to death" of the victim.'

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"Those are statements made by Arthur F. Cramp, M.D., at the time he was Director of the Bureau of Investigation, American Medical Association.

"But do such strong statements prevent women from taking reducing preparations, without knowing what's in them? They do not.

"Just recently the San Francisco Station of the Food and Drug Administration reported the death of a woman who died after taking a certain reducing preparation. She first took the stuff -- in capsule form -- in a moderate manner; then in more liberal quantities. Following a large dose, acute pain developed; the woman's temperature rose to a point where immersion in an ice tank failed to bring relief. She died a few hours later.

"The preparation she took, when examined, was found to contain dinitrophenol."

Our correspondent concludes her letter with another quotation from Doctor Cramp's article:

"If you wish to reduce, don't experiment with yourself -- it might be dangerous; consult a doctor. For, as one high medical authority said in discussing the treatment of obesity, 'There are few diseases in which it is so vitally important to adapt the treatment to special cases, and it must be varied from day to day to respond to indications as they arise.'"

And that's all of today's report. I don't believe our Washington correspondent need worry about us. We've heard too many of her reports, not to be extremely cautious when it comes to obesity cures. And we have listened to the warnings of the Food and Drug Administration, about certain reducing preparations known to be dangerous.

Quotations from "Now You Can Reduce" by Arthur F. Cramp, M.D., in The Reader's Digest for February 1935.
